

## CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for supporting material to be treated in continuously operated thermal treatment furnaces, where the supporting of the material is realized by  
5 means of support elements installed externally to the furnace, in the vicinity of the orifice of the thermal treatment furnace, said apparatus comprising at least two support elements that are installed movably, so that the mutual positions of the support elements can be adjusted by means of the drive arrangement of the support apparatus, **characterized** in that in connection with the housing  
10 element (1) used for supporting the support elements (4), there is installed at least one gas control element (5), which enables the flowing of the gas used in the treatment of the material (3) between the support element (4) and the control element (5), said control element (5) at the same time constituting part of the sealing of the thermal treatment furnace (6).
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2. An apparatus according to claim 1, **characterized** in that the control element (5) is installed between two sealing elements (11), so that the sealing elements (11) enable the directing of the gas flow essentially in parallel to the flowing direction of the material (3) to be supported, underneath the material to be  
20 supported, between the support element (4) and the control element (5).
3. An apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that in between the control elements (5), there is installed an intermediate support element (13).
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4. An apparatus according to claim 1, 2 or 3, **characterized** in that in between the control element (5) and the sealing element (11), there is installed an intermediate support element (13).
5. An apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that  
30 part of the surface (7) of the control element (5) and part of the surface (10) of

the support element (4) form part of the circumference of one and the same circle (9).

6. An apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that  
5 the control element (5) is curved essentially throughout its surface.

7. An apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that  
the support element (4) of the support apparatus is provided with a flow-through  
type cooling agent circulation (12).

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8. An apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that  
the control element (5) of the support apparatus is provided with a flow-through  
type cooling agent circulation (12).

15 9. An apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that  
the sealing element (11) of the support apparatus is provided with a flow-  
through type cooling agent circulation (12).

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